

REMARKS

Response is hereby made to the Office Action dated April 20, 2004. By this Response, Applicant has amended claims 1, 17 and 33, cancelled claims 4 and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer, and added new claims 57-74. Claims 1-3, 6-7, 14-19, 21-23, 30-34, and 36-74 (4 independent and 54 dependent, a total of 58 claims) are pending in this Application. No new matter has been added by this Response.

Although no additional fees or extensions of time are believed to be required for entry of this Response, the Commissioner is authorized and requested to grant any extension and/or to debit any fees that may be required to avoid abandonment of this Application (including any fees for additional claims or extensions of time) from Deposit Account No. 50-2117.

Claim Objections/Prior Art Rejections

The Office Action rejected several of the prior-pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103, citing European Patent EP 0996052A2 ("Kuribayashi") in combination with US Patent No. 5,817,034 ("Hardin, Sr.") and/or US Patent No. 6,563,514B1 ("Samar"). Applicants note that other claims were previously indicated as allowable. Although Applicant has cancelled allowed dependent claims 4 and 20 by this Response, similar language appears in currently-pending independent claims 1, 17 and 33. Language previously found in allowed claim 46 similarly appears in currently-pending independent claim 74. Reconsideration of all of the prior rejections is respectfully requested.

Applicant has amended the claims for the sole purposes of clarification and speedy allowance, and does not wish to disclaim any subject matter or legal equivalence by this response. Applicant has amended independent claims 17 and 33, for example, to move certain structural aspects of the claim to the preamble and to clarify that the claims are not intended to be interpreted under the "step-plus-function" provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicant has also removed the 'coupling' and 'operating' steps from claim 17 to broaden the scope of the claim. These amendments are not made for purposes relating to patentability, and do not narrow the scope of the claims. These amendments therefore do not restrict the range of legal equivalents that may otherwise be available. Further, Applicant does not consent to any of the rejections contained in the Office Action, and expressly reserves the right to re-instate any cancelled

claims or amended subject matter in a continuation application or other appropriate document at a later date.

Because each of the independent claims now contain subject matter previously indicated as allowable, each of these claims are now believed to be allowable. Additionally, each of the dependent claims are believed to be allowable *a fortiori*. Reconsideration of each of the rejections and allowance of all pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to further discuss this application, Applicant requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned at (480) 385-5060 or bcarlson@ifllaw.com.

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Respectfully submitted,

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